



Mr. Tom Torlakson  
State Superintendent of Public Instruction  
California Department of Education  
1430 N Street  
Sacramento, California 95814

November 25, 2014

**Re: Proposed Rulemaking for Title 2, Chapter 2, Instruction in Social Sciences**

Dear Mr. Torlakson:

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC), on behalf of our nearly 230,000 members in California, would like to thank the Department of Education for considering critical updates to the educational framework necessary to ensure the full implementation of the Fair, Accurate, Inclusive, and Respectful (FAIR) Education Act. The Human Rights Campaign is America's largest civil rights organization working to achieve lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) equality. By inspiring and engaging all Americans, HRC strives to end discrimination against LGBT citizens and realize a nation that achieves fundamental fairness and equality for all. As an advocate of equal rights for all members of the LGBT community, HRC believes that schools should offer an inclusive primary and secondary school curriculum, which includes a fair and accurate history of the LGBT community.

The proposed framework for Title 2, Chapter 2 includes some mention of LGBT history but fails to include benchmarks that afford a thorough and complete understanding of the rich and complex history of the LGBT community. The limited topics that the California Department of Education (CDE) include an introduction to Harvey Milk in the third grade and the Lavender Scare, Cleve Jones, and same-sex marriage in the eleventh grade. We feel that these additions, while positive, are inadequate, and we urge you to expand the curricular framework. Instead, we urge the CDE to adopt the framework developed by the Committee on LGBT History, an affiliate of the American Historical Association (available at <http://clgbthistory.org/resources/fair-framework>). The Committee's proposed framework was assembled by the nation's top historians specializing in LGBT issues and reviewed by a number of Californian educators.

Unfortunately, the proposed regulation makes no mention of Lesbian, Bisexual, or Transgender history, which are essential components to achieve the purpose of the FAIR Education Act. The Committee on LGBT History's curriculum incorporates LGBT history by discussing topics such as the parallels between the civil rights movements in the 1960s and the LGBT rights movement, the growing visibility of the LGBT community during the rise of consumerism, and reinforcement of heterosexual marriage in the post-Reconstruction era, which are not included in the CDE proposal.

Inclusive curriculum provides a number of benefits to LGBT students, including less exposure to anti-LGBT language, an increased sense of safety, less absenteeism, higher level of acceptance, and greater sense of connectedness to the school. A thorough inclusion of LGBT history ensures that graduates have a deeper understanding of the impact of the LGBT community, better preparing them for working and interacting with the diverse populations of both California and the nation as a whole.

Finally, it is important that the framework use correct terminology when referring to the LGBT community. Terms such as “gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender” such be used instead of terms like “homosexual,” which is often seen as disparaging. Similarly, marriage between two people of the same gender should be referred to as “same sex marriage” rather than “gay marriage.”

Thank you for providing us with the opportunity for comment on the implementing regulations of the FAIR Education ACT. HRC strongly supported passage of this legislation, and we are pleased to see the CDE has taken concrete steps toward implementation and enforcement of the Act, which will serve to better educate the youth of California. If you should have any questions regarding these comments, please contact me at 202-572-8960 or by email at [Alison.Gill@hrc.org](mailto:Alison.Gill@hrc.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AG', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Alison Gill, Esq.  
Senior Legislative Counsel